



Victimization Among Special Populations: Sexual Minorities/LGBTs

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Flashback to 1988...

In a case involving the beating death of an Asian-American gay man, a Florida Circuit Judge jokingly asked the prosecutor, "That's a crime now, to beat up a homosexual?"

The prosecutor replied, "Yes, sir. And it's also a crime to kill him."

The judge replied, "Times have really changed."

As described by Berrill, K. T., & Herek, G. M. (1990). Primary and secondary victimization in anti-gay hate crimes: Official response and public policy. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 5, 401-413.



Thankfully, times have changed... but how much?

- 33 states and DC have legalized same-sex marriages
- 21 states and DC have laws prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity
- many states have instituted anti-bullying policies to protect LGBT students

BUT, only 30 states and DC have laws against sexual orientation hate crimes that may or may not include gender identity in its protections

See Human Rights Campaign maps: <http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/maps-of-state-laws-policies>



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“It’s very, very clear that the boys were attacked because they’re gay,” Kunkle said. “It started out with the question of, ‘Is that your fucking boyfriend?’ and then went to ‘I’m sick of you faggots, you dirty faggots’ the entire time the assault was happening. That to me is very clear why they were beat up. The language wasn’t, ‘You’re in my way’ or ‘I don’t like your T-shirt.’ It was, ‘You’re a fag.’”

Quoted from Jen Colletta’s article in the Philadelphia Gay News on September 25, 2014.

<http://www.epgn.com/news/local/7918-gay-bashing-suspects-out-on-bail>



Defining the population

“Sexual minorities” include lesbian women, gay men, bisexual men and women, and transgender men and women; i.e., ‘the LGBT community’

Multidimensionality of sexual orientation: includes attraction, behavior, and self-identification

Transgender is about gender identity. Uniquely and highly vulnerable among sexual minority populations.



Prevalence of sexual minorities in the US

About 3.5% of the US adult population identifies as gay, lesbian, or bisexual... about 8 million people.

At least 700,000 transgender individuals living the US

Gary Gates at the William's Institute, UCLA School of Law:

<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/how-many-people-are-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender/>



Significant health disparities

The unique stress that sexual minorities experience is associated with greater prevalence of health disparities, including:

- Risky drinking patterns, particularly among sexual minority women and transgender individuals
- Higher rates of obesity among sexual minority women
- Higher rates of some forms of cancer
- Significantly greater mental health symptoms, particularly anxiety and depression

Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674-697. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674

Frost, D. M., Lehavot, K., & Meyer, I. H. (2013). Minority stress and physical health among sexual minority individuals. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. doi: 10.1007/s10865-013-9523-8



Violent victimization disparities

While sexual minorities comprise only 3.5% of the population, 30% of reported hate crimes each year involve sexual orientation based violence.

Stotzer, R. L. (2012). Comparison of hate crime rates across protected and unprotected groups- An update: The Williams Institute.

<http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/violence-crime/comparison-of-hate-crime-rates-across-protected-and-unprotected-groups/>



The 2012 FBI's Uniform Crime Report: 1,376 cases of sexual-orientation based hate crime offenses reported to US law enforcement agencies:

- 29% resulted from anti-homosexual bias
- 54% were motivated by anti-male homosexual bias
- 13% were prompted by anti-female homosexual bias.

U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2012). 2012 Hate crime statistics Retrieved November 24, 2014, from <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/hate-crime/2012>



National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP)

- Compile data from 14 anti-violence programs in 13 states
 - 2,001 total reported incidents in 2013
 - Similar rates from prior years, but a substantial increase in violence severity, with transgender women, people of color, and gay men at highest homicide risk
 - Fewer LGBT victims reported incidents to law enforcement and, among those who did report to the police, more reported hostile law enforcement reactions. Victims reported worrisome levels of physical violence and hostility inflicted on victims by the police
 - Furthermore, a majority (76%) reported that their experience of hate violence was not classified as a bias crime by the police

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (2014). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected intimate partner violence in 2013. New York, New York. <http://avp.org/about-avp/national-coalition-of-anti-violence-programs>



Centers for Disease Control: The National Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Assault Survey

- Gay and bisexual men report significantly higher prevalence of sexual victimization (other than rape) compared to heterosexual men.
- Bisexual women reported significantly higher prevalence of sexual violence (including rape) compared to lesbian and heterosexual women.

Walters, M. L., & Breiding, M. J. (2013). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 findings on victimization by sexual orientation. Atlanta, Georgia: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Violent victimization uniquely detrimental to sexual minorities

- Not only a personal attack on the character of the victim, but also a symbolic reminder to the larger LGBT community of their vulnerability, isolation, lack of legal protections
- Produces greater adverse long-term psychological consequences for victims than other forms of crime
- More violent and are more likely to involve hospitalization than other bias-based crimes

Kuehnle, K., & Sullivan, A. (2003). Gay and lesbian victimization: Reporting factors in domestic violence and bias incidents. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 30(1), 85-96. doi: 10.1177/009385480223916

Herek, G. M., Gillis, J. R., & Cogan, J. C. (1999). Psychological sequelae of hate-crime victimization among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 67(6), 945-951. doi: 10.1037/0022-006x.67.6.945



Sexual orientation bias crimes have unique characteristics For homicides:

- Offenders are more likely to be White males of younger age than offenders of non-LGBT bias homicides.
- Homicidal attacks are often perpetrated by small groups and often involve 'over-kill' whereby the victim is mutilated in symbolic ways, with the perpetrator using non-lethal weapons such as knives or blunt objects used to 'bash' victims.



Characteristics con't

- Targets are most often men who are perceived by the attackers to be gay.
- Public and private locations- nearly half (43%) occurring in private residences and others occurring in shelters and at the workplace.

Ciarlante, M., & Fountain, K. (2010). Why it matters: Rethinking victim assistance for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer victims of hate violence & intimate partner violence (pp. 1-22): National Center for Victims of Crime and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs.

Gruenewald, J. (2012). Are anti-LGBT homicides in the United States unique? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 27(18), 3601-3623. doi: 10.1177/0886260512462301

Gruenewald, J., & Kelley, K. (2014). Exploring anti-LGBT homicide by mode of victim selection. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 41(9), 1130-1152. doi: 10.1177/0093854814541259

National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs. (2014). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected intimate partner violence in 2013. New York, New York. <http://avp.org/about-avp/national-coalition-of-anti-violence-programs>



Providing accurate estimates is challenging—underreporting common. Why?

- History of prejudice in the criminal justice system = Fear of re-victimization when reporting
- Fear of outing oneself
- Failure to account for sexual or gender identity in police reports
 - Law enforcement officers often lack the training, skills, and means to identify a bias-related crime and properly document it.
- Many victims of bias-related crimes may be a member of more than one minority group; thus, the nature of the bias crime may be reported as something that appears more obvious to law enforcement, such as race.



Methodological challenges and imperatives

Challenge to achieve sufficient power to accomplish our statistical objectives

- Critical that we advocate for the inclusion of questions about sexual orientation and gender identity in diverse research studies, particularly large population-based surveys.
 - To do this well, we need to:
 - Develop and refine empirically sound survey questions to address violent victimization among sexual minorities. Humanely and empathically.
- Utilize longitudinal study designs to better understand the complex causal processes underlying vulnerability to and consequences of violent victimization



Other methodological considerations

- Must better understand how multiple and overlapping identities impact experiences of violence by enrolling sufficient subgroups in our research to conduct comparative analyses
 - Groups to allow for sexual identity comparisons (e.g., lesbian vs. bisexual vs. heterosexual women)
 - Groups to allow for racial and ethnic comparisons



Alternatives to power-driven surveys

- consider community-based study designs that utilize other sampling methodologies, such as Respondent-Driven Sampling
- continue to strive to conduct exploratory and descriptive studies, particularly those that utilize mixed-methods approaches
- educate reviewers about gaps in knowledge and practical design solutions that acknowledge unique challenges associated with studying this population (e.g., recruitment)



Discussion primers

We need to evaluate existing programs designed to address the needs of LGBT victims of violence and seek a better understanding how current mainstream services can be refined to become more culturally-competent in meeting the needs of this population.

- need to develop evidence-based victim services.
- need to identify and bridge gaps in services (e.g., gay male victims of IPV lack shelter accommodations, transgender individuals require special consideration when incarcerated)



Need research about secondary victimization, i.e., revictimization, and other poor outcomes among sexual minorities who experience violent victimization

- What kinds of law enforcement responses are perceived as most supportive and healing for victims?
- How do sexual minorities perceive official judicial responses to their reports of violent victimization?
- What are the long-term consequences of experiencing violence for this population?



Need to identify the mechanisms associated with victimization (and how they compare to heterosexuals)

- What are the characteristics of these events, such as location?
- What are the characteristics of the perpetrator(s)?
- What are LGBT victims' help-seeking behaviors?
- What is the quality of formal and informal support systems that respond to these victims' needs?



We need to understand the intersection between violent victimization and health disparities among sexual minorities

- What is the role of risky alcohol use in elevating vulnerability to sexual assault?
- What are the long-term psychological consequences (e.g., PTSD, anxiety, depression) of violent victimization among LGBTs?



Need to identify, develop, and test intervention and prevention programs to reduce violent victimization incidents among LGBTs.

- How can we use other effective programs—such as those developed to target sexual victimization among heterosexual women—to design support services for LGBTs in culturally-competent ways?
- Which programs might be most effective for different forms of violence, e.g., bystander interventions for bias crimes?



Thanks

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